

## A THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

On this rather unusual Mothering Sunday we wish all our mothers and grandmothers every blessing and God's gracious help and guidance in the days ahead. We especially look to the help and guidance of our Holy Mother the Church and the prayers and intercessions of Our Blessed Lady as we look to see the hidden providence of God in our present circumstances. May the Lord bring us through this extended Lent and Good Friday in the life of the Church to a glorious Resurrection and to a New Pentecost!

### A Final Reflection

No doubt we are living through sombre and sobering times. These times have fallen upon us in the Season of Lent – a time of repentance, a time of conversion, a time of renewal. We must pray that this present pestilence will be, by God's grace, a great encouragement to repentance.

Of course we know of great plagues in previous centuries, and we know that in the Last Days of the Earth there will also be great plagues, and famines and earthquakes – perhaps we are in those days now, or at least at the beginning of those days. Who knows? The Apostles asked Jesus, 'when will these things take place?', and Jesus replied, 'Of that day and of that hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son – but only the Father. Therefore take heed, watch and pray! – for you do not know when the time will come.'

But we may safely say that every famine anticipates those famines of the Last Day, and every earthquake anticipates those great earthquakes of the Last Day, and every pestilence anticipates those plagues of the Last Day – and they prepare us, and warn us, and encourage us, to begin that repentance now. Death may take us suddenly – even in our everyday experience of life. How gracious of God, therefore, in this present pestilence, to help us toward that repentance.

Over the past few years we have been praying in St. Joseph's and in St. John Kemble for the gift of repentance, for the grace of repentance – and for a New Pentecost. If the present pestilence leads us to a deeper repentance, a deeper reflection on life, a deeper longing for spiritual realities, then we must pray that this purging of the nation and of the world, may also be a purging of the Church – a return to basics, the importance of a clean conscience before God, the importance of Confession, the importance of charity and almsgiving.

We are passing away. We are leaving this world. We are passing through. Let us pray that this present pestilence restores us to a proper perspective of life – restores us to a proper sense of values, so that if death should come for us, we are ready. No! Not, 'if' death comes to us but 'when' death comes for us, we shall be ready – or, at least, in the habit of making ourselves ready, through a daily surrender, a daily repentance, a daily consecration. Some of us may not survive this pandemic. That is a sobering thought – and ought not to be dismissed. Thankfully, children and young people seem to be largely immune from the more serious consequences of the pandemic. For this we must thank God. But we who are older must be sober as is appropriate to maturing years. We are not children. We have already known the loss of loved ones. We know the pattern of life. It's decline – and often it's sudden end. So, in the days ahead, let us be examples of repentance, examples of faith – and if these days ahead should be the beginning of the end of days, then by our example may we be witnesses to the world that we are not looking to the grave – but to the skies because, says Jesus, 'when you see these things begin to take place – look up and raise your heads! because your Redemption is drawing near!' ( Luke 21 v 28 ).

May God grant to us, in this Season of Lent a deep repentance, and may the coming Kingdom of God – when Christ appears in glory – break upon us now in a New Pentecost and a pandemic of grace and mercy flowing in torrents of Divine Mercy from the Sacred Heart of Jesus to Whom be glory now and forever. Amen!